



University of  
**Southern  
Queensland**



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# Animal Ethics Handbook

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# Introduction

## Animal use statement

The University of Southern Queensland (UniSQ) is dedicated to fostering a culture that ensures the ethical, humane, and responsible care and use of animals for scientific purposes, including teaching. University staff and students must ensure that respect for animals underpins all decisions and actions involving the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, maintaining this respect throughout the animal's lifetime.

UniSQ's vision is to undertake world-leading Research that enhances the wellbeing of humans and animals, and protects our environment. Research and teaching activities involving animals at UniSQ aim to:

- Advance wildlife management to conserve species and habitats;
- Reduce human-wildlife conflict;
- Improve agricultural and environmental sustainability;
- Refine livestock husbandry; and
- Enhance animal care, health, and welfare.



Openness Agreement  
on Animal Research and Teaching in Australia

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**SIGNATORY**

The University of Southern Queensland (UniSQ) is proud to be a signatory to the Openness Agreement on Animal Research and Teaching in Australia, demonstrating our commitment to transparency and ethical conduct in all activities involving animals.

The University is committed to promoting and ensuring the ethical use of animals for scientific purposes.

UniSQ ensures that animals are only used for scientific purposes when:

- There is clear scientific or education merit; and
- The potential effects on the animals are ethically justified by the anticipated benefits to humans, animals or the environment.

The University is committed to applying the 3Rs at all stages of animal care and use through:

- 'Replacing' animals with alternative methods that permit the purpose of an activity or project to be achieved without the use of animals;
- 'Reducing' the number of animals used through deploying methods for obtaining comparable levels of information from the use of fewer animals in scientific procedures, or for obtaining more information from the same number of animals; and
- 'Refinement' of techniques and methods that alleviate or minimise potential pain and distress and enhance animal wellbeing.

## Purpose of this handbook

This handbook has been developed to assist investigators in their understanding of the regulatory framework that governs the use of animals for scientific purposes as well as the UniSQ processes for ethical review.

All research and teaching activities involving animals must comply with:

- The Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes, 8th edn, 2013 (updated 2021) (the Code); and
- relevant state or territory legislation, including the *Queensland Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*.

Key requirements include:

- approval of all animal activities by the UniSQ Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) prior to commencement
- completion of training; and
- Demonstrated competency in all animal procedures.

## Need assistance?

If you have any questions or require support with your ethics application, please:

- Visit the [animal ethics website](#)
- Refer to the [Animal Ethics Procedure](#) and [Terms of Reference](#)
- Contact the Ethics Team by email: [animal.ethics@unisq.edu.au](mailto:animal.ethics@unisq.edu.au)

## Periodic review

This handbook should be reviewed by the AEC every four years and also when changes to the Code or the Queensland [Animal Care and Protection Act 2001](#) (the Act) are made.

# Australia's framework for responsible and ethical animal care and use

The *Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes* (8<sup>th</sup> edition, updated 2021) establishes the ethical, humane, and responsible standards for the care and use of animals for scientific activities. It provides an ethical framework and governing principles to guide decisions and actions of all individuals involved in animal care and use, including investigators, animal carers, institutions, and Animal Ethics Committees (AECs).

The Code provides a comprehensive guidance on the operation and composition of AECs. It outlines the information required for the AEC to assess proposed animal use, describes the review pathways for submissions, and offers detailed guidance on specific activities such as the use of animals in teaching, standards for animal care and housing and procedures for monitoring animal wellbeing.

Investigators must study and comply with the Code, developing a sound understanding of sections relevant to their work - particularly those addressing the ethical justification for animal use, responsibilities in animal care and monitoring, and requirements for reporting and record-keeping.

*Projects that are not scientifically valid must not be performed - no matter how mild the impact on the wellbeing of the animal.*

The Code also mandates external oversight of institutions and their Animal Ethics Committees (AECs). As part of this oversight, institutions are required to undergo an independent external review of their operations at least once every four years. These reviews assess compliance with the Code and evaluate the effectiveness of institutional processes and AEC functions.

Section 6 of the Code, Independent External Review of the Operation of Institutions, outlines the scope of these reviews, the procedures involved, and the responsibilities of the review panel. Most regulatory bodies require institutions to submit copies of the review reports.

Conducting these reviews and acting on findings is a condition as an approved organisation permitted to use animals in scientific and educational activities.

## Governing Principles of the Code

The ethical framework and governing principles outlined in the Code guide all involved in the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, including:

- Investigators

- Teachers
- Institutions
- Animal Ethics Committees (AECs)
- All personnel listed on animal ethics applications

These principles set the foundation for responsible and humane animal use. All individuals named on an AEC application are required to read and comply with the Code.

## Governing Principles


Respect for animals must underpin all decisions and actions involving the care and use of animals for scientific purposes.



### Respect for animals




**Animal use must be justified**  
Only use animals when it is scientifically justified.




**Support animal wellbeing**  
Ensure the wellbeing of animals involved.



**Minimise harm and distress**  
Avoid or minimise pain, distress, and harm.



**Uphold scientific integrity**  
Apply high standards of scientific integrity.




### Apply the 3Rs

**Replacement**



Use methods that replace animals.

**Reduction**



Use fewer animals whenever possible

**Refinement**





Refine techniques to minimise adverse impacts.


The **3Rs** apply at all stages of animal care and use.





### Ongoing Responsibilities














Acquisition   Transport   Breeding   Housing & Husbandry   Animal use for project   End-of-use



**Ethical review**

The care and use of animals for scientific purposes is subject to ethical review.

## Key definitions within the Code

Detailed legislative definitions and extended examples are provided in the [Appendix](#).

**Activity:** any action or group of actions undertaken that involves the care and use of animals, including acquisition, transport, breeding, housing and husbandry of those animals. An activity may involve one or more procedures. Activities are described in an application to the animal ethics committee. See also '[Project](#)'.

**Animal:** Any live vertebrate (excluding humans), including amphibians, birds, fish, mammals, and reptiles; live prenatal or pre-hatched creatures in the last half of gestation or development; live marsupial young; and live cephalopods (e.g., octopus and squid).

*Note: Full legislative definition under Queensland Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 is in [Appendix](#).*

- any live vertebrate (this includes amphibians, birds, fish, mammals (other than humans), reptiles;
- live prenatal or pre-hatched creatures in the last half of gestation or development, including mammalian or reptilian foetuses, prehatched avian, mammalian or reptilian young (eggs)
- live marsupial young;
- a live invertebrate creature of a species, or a stage of the life cycle of a species, from the class Cephalopoda (e.g. octopus, squid, nautilus, cuttlefish); livestock, companion animals, laboratory animals, wildlife, pests, feral animals and zoo animals. The following are not considered legally defined animals under the ACPA:
  - humans including human foetus;
  - the eggs, spat or spawn of fish;
  - a pre-natal, larval, or pre-hatched creature, other than those mentioned above;
  - another immature form of a creature, other than those mentioned above immature amphibians and fish prior to final metamorphosis (e.g. fish fry and tadpoles).

**Animal welfare:** An animal's quality of life, encompassing its perception and response to circumstances, ranging from wellbeing to distress.

**Animal wellbeing:** an animal is in a positive mental state and is able to achieve successful biological function, has positive experiences, expresses innate behaviours, and copes with stressors.

**Biological product<sup>1</sup> :** any product derived from animals, including blood products, vaccines, antisera, semen, antibodies and cell lines.

**Compliance:** acting in accordance with the Code.

**Conflict of interest:** a situation in which a person's individual interests or responsibilities may influence professional obligations.

**Euthanasia:** the humane killing of an animal, in the interests of its own welfare, to alleviate pain and distress.

*See also: Humane Killing.*

**Humane killing:** Inducing death using a species-appropriate method that results in rapid loss of consciousness without recovery and minimal pain or distress.

*Key difference from euthanasia: the reason for killing.*

**Investigator:** any person who uses animals for scientific purposes, including researchers, teachers, students, and those involved in testing or surveys.

**Monitoring:** measures undertaken to assess animal wellbeing in accordance with the Code.

**Project:** A discrete piece of work aiming to achieve a scientific purpose.

**Scientific purposes:** Activities aimed at acquiring, developing, or demonstrating knowledge or techniques in science, including teaching, research, diagnosis, product testing, and production of biological products.

**Teaching activity:** Actions undertaken to impart or demonstrate knowledge or techniques for educational outcomes in science.

**Unexpected adverse event:** An unanticipated event negatively impacting animal wellbeing (e.g., unexpected death, adverse effects, power failures).

*Examples provided in the [Appendix](#).*

## State and territory legislation

Scientific use of animals in Australia is governed by both national and state/territory legislation. While all jurisdictions incorporate the Code as a central component of their regulatory framework, each state and territory has its own laws and regulatory authority.

### National Level

- The Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes (the Code) provides the ethical framework and responsibilities for all researchers and institutions.
- It establishes principles for humane and responsible animal care, ethical review, compliance obligations.

### State and Territory Level

- Each jurisdiction enforces the Code through its own legislation and regulatory authority.
- Additional requirements may apply depending on the state or territory
- Approval from an Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) in one jurisdiction does not automatically authorise scientific activities in another jurisdiction.

AEC approval is mandatory for all scientific animal use across Australia, but compliance with local legislation is also a requirement.

## UniSQ’s jurisdictional coverage

UniSQ is currently registered to conduct animal-based scientific activities in the following jurisdictions:

Jurisdiction	Legislation	Regulatory Authority
<a href="#">Queensland</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Animal Care and Protection Act 2001</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">2012 and 2023 Animal Care and Protection Regulations</a></li> </ul>	<a href="#">Biosecurity Queensland</a>
<a href="#">New South Wales</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Animal Research Act 1985</a>,</li> <li>• <a href="#">Animal Research Amendment (Prohibition of Forced Swim Tests and Forced Smoke Inhalation Experiments) Act 2024</a>,</li> <li>• <a href="#">Animal Research Amendment (Right to Release) Act 2022</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Animal Research Regulation 2021</a></li> </ul>	<a href="#">NSW Department of Primary Industries</a>
<a href="#">Victoria</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Prevention of Cruelty to Animal Act (1986)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulations (2019)</a></li> </ul>	<a href="#">Agriculture Victoria</a>

*Researchers planning to work in jurisdictions where UniSQ is not registered must contact the **Ethics Team** for advice. In such cases, alternative arrangements - such as seeking approval from a local AEC may be recommended.*

## Queensland’s Animal Care and Protection Act

In Queensland, the relevant legislation is the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 (the Act), administered by Biosecurity Queensland within the Department of Primary Industries. Compliance with the Code is legally mandatory as it is embedded within the Act.

The Act outlines how scientific animal use is regulated, including:

- The role and responsibilities of the regulator
- The registration system for institutions and individuals using animals for scientific purposes
- The powers of government inspectors
- Offences related to the misuse of animals in scientific contexts

It is an offence to use animals for scientific purposes unless:

- You are registered with the regulator or operating under the registration of a registered institution
- You have approval from a registered Animal Ethics Committee (AEC)
- You comply with all conditions set by the AEC
- Your activities adhere to the requirements of the Code.

When conducting research outside Queensland:

- Carry a copy of the UniSQ license/registration for that state or territory.
- Carry your UniSQ AEC approval notice.
- For a copy of the UniSQ license/registration for the state where you will be working, contact [animal.ethics@unisq.edu.au](mailto:animal.ethics@unisq.edu.au). Or refer to the files within [General | UniSQ AEC - Researchers and Teachers | Microsoft Teams](#)

## Other approvals and requirements that may be required

The need to obtain AEC approval is separate from the need to obtain other approvals and comply with additional requirements. These may include:

- Government/state-issued permits, such as:
  - [Wildlife Research Permits](#) (DETSI), and
  - Permits issued under the [Nature Conservation \(Animals\) Regulation 2020](#) for work in protected estates (e.g., national parks, state forests).
- [Biosafety](#) approval for:
  - Collection, use, storage and shipping of biological materials and/or regulated substances
  - Refer [Biosafety Central](#) and obtain a [biosecurity instrument permit](#) under the [Biosecurity Act 2014](#)).
- Local animal welfare legislation applicable to the jurisdiction where the activity occurs.



**AEC approval is usually required before government/state-issued permits will be granted. For government-issued permits, state legislation and requirements also apply.**

## International requirements

If you are planning to conduct Research involving animals outside Australia, you may still require approval from the UniSQ Animal Ethics Committee (AEC). The AEC may accept overseas ethical approvals only if specific conditions are met. Applications involving work in other countries that will

be conducted by UniSQ investigators will be accepted for consideration if it can be demonstrated by the Principal Investigator that:

- the activity or project will comply with the Code, and will not breach relevant local legislation;
- the activity or project is not being carried out in another country as a means of avoiding compliance with the Code;
- Animal care and use can be properly monitored. The UniSQ AEC may choose to appoint a delegate to act on its behalf in such matters;
- the UniSQ AEC has been provided with adequate information on local compliance requirements and how these will be met; and
- any approval granted by an Animal Ethics Committee in another country may be accepted by the UniSQ AEC if it can be demonstrated that the outcomes would be the equivalent of those expected through application of the Code.

If you are unsure whether your overseas project requires UniSQ AEC approval, or if you already have overseas approvals and would like the UniSQ AEC to consider accepting them:

- email the Ethics Team at [animal.ethics@unisq.edu.au](mailto:animal.ethics@unisq.edu.au).
- Include:
  - details of your proposed Research
  - copies of any approvals you have obtained or plan to obtain.

The Ethics Team will assess your submission and advise whether UniSQ AEC approval is required or whether your overseas approval can be accepted.



**UniSQ staff and students must not commence activities on overseas projects involving animals unless they have received advice or approval from the UniSQ AEC.**

## Oversight of animal care and use at UniSQ

The University is a registered user of animals for scientific purposes. It is therefore obliged to comply with the requirements of the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 (Qld) (the “Act”); the Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes, 8th Edition, 2013 (the “Code”). The University also complies with the legislation and other requirements governing the use of animals in other states and territories where a license to use animals is held.

In accordance with the requirements of the Act and the Code, the University has established the [University of Southern Queensland Animal Ethics Committee](#) (UniSQ AEC), which is tasked with

ensuring that all activities relating to the care and use of animals are conducted in compliance with the Code.

All activities that involve the care and use of animals for scientific purposes must be approved by the UniSQ AEC before they commence. The UniSQ [Animal Ethics Procedure](#) details the operational framework for animal care and use activities conducted at the University.

## UniSQ Animal Ethics Committee

Animal Ethics Committees (AECs) are formally constituted bodies responsible for the ethical review and oversight of all scientific and educational activities involving animals. Their functions and membership are defined by legislation, and they play a critical role in ensuring that all animal use by Australian-based investigators is conducted ethically, humanely, and in compliance with the Australian Code and relevant laws.

Table. 1 AEC Membership Categories and Criteria

Category	Criteria
<b>Category A</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Holds qualifications in veterinary science recognised for registration as a veterinary surgeon in Australia</li><li>- Has experience relevant to the institution's activities or the ability to acquire relevant knowledge</li></ul>
<b>Category B</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Holds a higher degree in research qualifications (or equivalent experience) in a field related to the care and use of animals for scientific purposes</li><li>- Possesses substantial and recent experience in the care and use of animals for scientific purposes</li></ul>
<b>Category C</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Has a demonstrable commitment to, and established experience in, furthering the welfare of animals</li><li>- Is not employed by or otherwise associated with UniSQ</li><li>- Is not currently involved in the care and use of animals for scientific purposes</li></ul>
<b>Category D</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Is not employed by or otherwise associated with UniSQ</li><li>- Has never been involved in the use of animals for scientific or teaching activities, either in employment or beyond undergraduate education</li><li>- Does not meet the criteria for Category A–C membership</li></ul>

## The AEC Executive

The UniSQ AEC has established a UniSQ AEC Executive, as per the Code; the UniSQ AEC has delegated for the Executive to review minor amendments i.e. those not likely to cause pain, distress

or harm to the animals. Those who make up the AEC Executive is determined on an annual basis and must include the Committee's Chairperson and at least one Category C or D member.

## The Integrity and Ethics team

The Integrity and Ethics team provides advice and practical assistance to investigators seeking animal ethics approval for an activity and while conducting approved projects. Support includes:

- Guidance on planning and conducting projects.
- Clarification of the Code, relevant legislation and UniSQ requirements.
- Assistance with preparing and submitting applications and other documentation to the Animal Ethics Committee.
- Pre-review of applications and submissions to help ensure completeness and compliance before formal review.
- Delivery of training on ethical animal use, the Code, and legislative requirements.

For any enquiries related to animal ethics, please contact: [animal.ethics@unisq.edu.au](mailto:animal.ethics@unisq.edu.au).

# Planning a project

## Consideration of the Code's Governing Principles

When planning projects, investigators must ensure compliance with the governing principles of the Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes. This involves careful consideration of ethical, scientific, and welfare requirements.

### Using animals only when justified

- does the project have merit?
- can the project aims be achieved entirely or in part without the use of animals?
- do the potential benefits justify the potential effects on the wellbeing of the animals?
- has justification been provided for activities that involve severe compromise to animal wellbeing?

### Supporting the wellbeing of animals

- are the animals living conditions and management appropriate for the species?
- have any special requirements for the care and management of animals met?
- are procedures in place for monitoring and managing animal health during the project?
- is justification provided for the care and management of the animals that does not accord with current best practice?

### Avoiding or minimising harm

- are known and potential causes of adverse impact on the wellbeing of animals identified?
- are strategies to avoid or minimise harm developed?
- is a pilot study incorporated into the design of the project if the potential impact on the animal cannot be predicted on the basis of available evidence?
- is the wellbeing of the animals regularly monitored and assessed by competent people?

### Applying high standards of scientific integrity

- is the species, source and biological status of the animals suited to the purpose of the project?
- do any factors contribute to the variability of results?
- unintended adverse impacts on animal wellbeing is avoided or minimised?
- are the methods and procedures in accordance with current best practice?
- are the methods and procedures appropriate for the purposes of the project?

### Applying the 3Rs

#### ***Replacement, Reduction and Refinement***

- have the 3Rs been considered and applied at all stages of the project?

- the project has been designed to use the minimum number of animals required to obtain valid data or achieve educational objectives and to satisfy good statistical design?

### **Knowing and accepting one's responsibilities**

All people involved in any aspect of the care and use of animals for scientific purposes must be aware of and accept their responsibilities and act in accordance with the Code.

### Replacement

**Definition:** *Methods that permit a given purpose of an activity or project to be achieved with the use of animals.*

Investigators must review and consider the use of alternatives to animals where possible, i.e. computer models.

- Conduct a literature review to identify if any alternatives to animal use are available.
- Investigators are required to demonstrate they have investigated alternative options.

### Reduction

**Definition:** *Methods for obtaining comparable levels of information from the use of fewer animals in scientific procedures or for obtaining more information from the same number of animals.*

Investigators may find alternatives to animal use is not an option. Therefore, it is a requirement that investigators use the least number of animals possible while ensuring they have enough animals to achieve the expected results.

Investigators should be seeking expertise from statisticians to ensure the numbers are correct.

Key questions to consider:

- has a power calculation been conducted?
- has a statistician been consulted?

*Using too many animals is a significant waste, however, using too few animals can also be a waste as desired results cannot be achieved, and experiments may need to be repeated*

### Refinement

**Definition:** *Methods that alleviate or minimise potential pain and distress and enhance animal wellbeing.*

Investigators must make efforts to support and safeguard animal wellbeing at all stages of the project. Projects must outline what strategies are in place to ensure animal wellbeing is being ensured.

Key questions to consider:

- does the project require environmental enrichment? if yes, is this appropriate to the animal?
- are plans in place to minimise any pain or distress animals may experience?
- are housing conditions appropriate?

Investigators should be looking at refinement from an animal's perspective.

**Also, consider the following:**

- Has everything an animal will experience from start to finish been described?
- Have any cumulative impacts been considered?
- Does the application outline how animal wellbeing will be maintained?

## Research design

**PREPARE** (Planning Research and Experimental Procedures of Animals – Recommendations for Excellence) is a planning framework developed by Norecopa to help researchers design animal studies that are scientifically robust, ethically sound, and logistically feasible

### How PREPARE Helps During Planning

The PREPARE guidelines cover 15 key areas, including:

- **Literature review and justification:** Ensuring the study is necessary and builds on existing knowledge.
- **Legal and ethical requirements:** Aligning with the Australian Code and Queensland legislation.
- **Experimental design:** Including randomisation, blinding, and sample size calculations.
- **Animal welfare:** Planning for humane endpoints, monitoring, and minimising distress.
- **Facility and personnel safety:** Considering risks to staff, students, and visitors

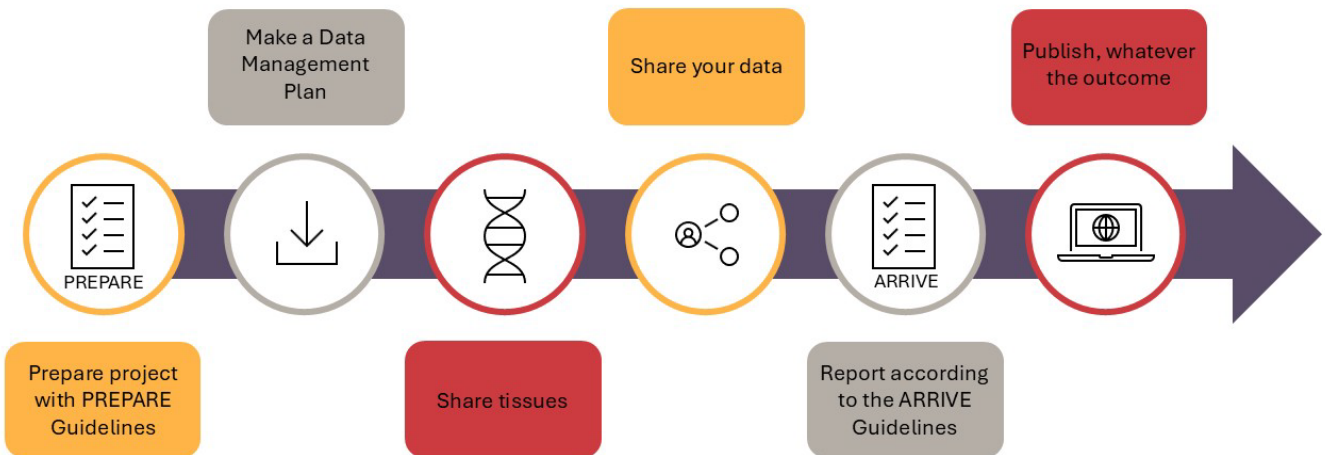
[PREPARE](#) website and [checklist](#)

## Data and statistical analysis planning

The AEC expects clarity on how data will be analysed. Applications should include:

1. The types of statistical tests to be used and why they are appropriate.
2. How assumptions of these tests will be checked (e.g., normality, independence).
3. Plans for handling missing data or outliers.

4. A commitment to transparent reporting, including effect sizes and confidence intervals.



## Planning resources

- [Best practice methodology in the use of animals for scientific purposes](#)
- National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement & Reduction of Animals in Research (NC3Rs) - [Experimental Design Assistant](#)
- Online Statistics - [Power and sample size calculators](#) - [statistics calculators](#)
- [Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes \('the Code'\) 8th edn, 2013 \(updated 2021\)](#). (e.g. 3Rs Section 1)

## Transparency and reproducibility of Research

**ARRIVE** ([Animal Research: Reporting of In Vivo Experiments](#)) is a reporting checklist developed by NC3Rs to ensure transparency and reproducibility in published animal research.

### How ARRIVE Supports Ethics Applications

The ARRIVE checklist ensures that researchers:

- Clearly describe the study's objectives, methodology, and statistical analysis.
- Report animal characteristics, housing, and welfare measures.
- Provide transparent information on randomisation, blinding, and exclusions.

Use this resource to plan your work: [ARRIVE Compliance Questionnaire.pdf](#)

Table 2. The ARRIVE Essential 10: Compliance Questionnaire

The ARRIVE Essential 10: Compliance Questionnaire		
Use this questionnaire to evaluate how well a manuscript complies with the ARRIVE Essential 10. It can be applied to any manuscript describing comparative experiments in living animals, by assessors such as journal staff, editors, or peer reviewers.		
Item	Question(s)	Answers
1 Study Design	Are all experimental and control groups clearly identified?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, for at least one experiment <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Is the experimental unit (e.g. an animal, litter or cage of animals) clearly identified?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, for at least one experiment <input type="checkbox"/> No
2 Sample Size	Is the exact number of experimental units in each group at the start of the study provided (e.g. in the format 'n=')?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, for at least one experiment <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Is the method by which the sample size was chosen explained?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, for at least one experiment <input type="checkbox"/> No
3 Inclusion & Exclusion Criteria	Are the criteria used for including and excluding animals, experimental units, or data points provided?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, for at least one experiment <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Are any exclusions of animals, experimental units, or data points reported, or is there a statement indicating that there were no exclusions?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, for at least one analysis <input type="checkbox"/> No
4 Randomisation	Is the method by which experimental units were allocated to control and treatment groups described?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, for at least one experiment <input type="checkbox"/> No
5 Blinding	Is it clear whether researchers were aware of, or blinded to, the group allocation at any stage of the experiment or data analysis?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, for at least one experiment <input type="checkbox"/> No
6 Outcome Measures	For all experimental outcomes presented, are details provided of exactly what parameter was measured?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, for at least one experiment <input type="checkbox"/> No
7 Statistical Methods	Is the statistical approach used to analyse each outcome detailed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, for at least one analysis <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Is there a description of any methods used to assess whether data met statistical assumptions?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, for at least one analysis <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
8 Experimental Animals	Are all species of animal used specified?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, for at least one experiment <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Is the sex of the animals specified?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, for at least one experiment <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable to species
	Is at least one of age, weight or developmental stage of the animals specified?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, for at least one experiment <input type="checkbox"/> No
9 Experimental Procedures	Are both the timing and frequency with which procedures took place specified?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, for at least one experiment <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Are details of acclimatisation periods to experimental locations provided?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, for at least one experiment <input type="checkbox"/> No
10 Results	Are descriptive statistics for each experimental group provided, with a measure of variability (e.g. mean and SD, or median and range)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, for at least one experiment <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable to the type of data collected
	Is the effect size and confidence interval provided?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, for at least one experiment <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable to the type of analysis used

# Training and competency

## Theoretical training

All investigators involved in the care and use of animals need to understand their responsibilities and the requirements of the Code. At a minimum, investigators should read and comply with:

- Section 1: Governing Principles
- Section 2.4: Responsibilities of investigators
- For investigators that also care for animals: Section 2.5: Responsibilities of animal carers
- Section 2.6 Other responsibilities of institutions, investigators and animal ethics committees
- Section 3: Animal wellbeing (including Sections 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4)
- For teachers: Section 4: The care and use of animals for the achievement of educational outcomes in science

All staff and students who plan to work with animals at UniSQ must also complete the mandatory online UniSQ Animal Care and Use Training administered through the Office of Research prior to the approval of an activity. Training must be recompleted every three years. Please visit the [Training and competencies webpage](#) for information on how to access the training.

Additional online training can be accessed through the ANZCCART ComPass training site <https://anzccart.adelaide.edu.au/compass>. Investigators are encouraged to consider whether any of these specialist modules can support their animal use.

All AEC members are required to complete the [UniSQ Animal Ethics Committee Induction](#).

## Technical training

The Code requires that people who care for and use animals must be competent for the procedures they are to perform before they commence work, or must work under the direct supervision of a person who is competent to perform the procedure. The type of training and the person providing the training will depend upon the species to be used and procedures to be performed. Training may be provided from competent people within Schools/Institutes in specialised procedures. Once training has been completed, competency assessment should occur. Those not yet competent should be given clear instruction as to how to improve their technique.

Training should include an understanding of why a procedure is being undertaken and how to prepare for the procedure, including the equipment required and any relevant risks to the animals or to humans. Training objectives should be clear and requirements for competency detailed within the Standard Operating Procedure. Competency-based assessment may cover both theoretical

knowledge of the procedure and the practical application of skills, including how to monitor animal wellbeing and how to respond in circumstances where complications arise.

Training can only be undertaken using animals if it has been approved as part of an animal ethics application. For training in techniques that have high welfare impacts, Principal (Responsible) Investigators must consider the feasibility of alternative options. A veterinarian should be consulted in the design of the procedures and training of such techniques. The higher the risk of a procedure (defined by the difficulty of undertaking the procedure accurately, the likelihood of complications or potential impact on the animal), the more training, ongoing support and oversight is likely to be required. Once an individual is trained, they must continue to be supported to achieve a high standard of skill.

Personnel listed on an AEC application may be exempt from training if they meet one of the following criteria:

1. The person has extensive experience in the procedure(s) to be undertaken and believes they can demonstrate competency after observation.
2. The person will not be involved with any hands-on work with live animals.

A Training and competency assessment record template is available to download from the UniSQ [Training and competencies webpage](#).

## Assessment of competency

The provision of effective training and the assessment of competency are essential for the successful undertaking of animal procedures and the implementation of the 3Rs.

Before an assessment of competency takes place, a training and assessment plan for the procedure must be submitted to the AEC for approval.

The University endeavours to ensure investigators continue to be competent in the procedures they perform by maintaining currency of practice and engaging in continuing professional development. Principal (Responsible) Investigators are expected to engage in ongoing learning and encourage team members to participate in ongoing learning activities.

## Training and competency assessment – wildlife

Given the range of wildlife species utilised by UniSQ researchers and their limited numbers, training in wildlife handling and procedures are completed in the field. All practical training is conducted by the Principal (Responsible) Investigator or another designated trainer that is experienced and competent in the procedure. The Principal (Responsible) Investigator is responsible for ensuring team members have undergone training and competency assessment and have the skills necessary to ensure they are able to perform the procedure(s) with minimal impact on target and

non-target species. Plans must be in place to ensure the prompt treatment or humane killing of any animal that is injured.

The AEC may not require evidence of competency for low-risk procedures such as observation only studies however, Principal (Responsible) Investigators must ensure that all team members are adequately trained and competent to perform any procedure when not under direct supervision of a competent person. Where ‘high-risk’ procedures are undertaken (e.g. sample collection, trapping, restraint), individuals must provide evidence of competency to the AEC before performing the procedure without supervision.

The Principal (Responsible) Investigator must provide a copy of any associated Authority e.g. Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme (ABBBS) Banding Authority, or provide a Training and Assessment Plan with their animal ethics protocol for AEC approval. The table below provides guidance on what wildlife procedures requires evidence of competency:

Table 3. Guide to Wildlife Training Requirements

Examples of techniques that do not require evidence of competency	Examples of techniques that do require evidence of competency
Bird surveying and identification using binoculars, scopes etc. This includes call playback	Mist netting or cannon netting birds (this training is already monitored by the ABBBS so this is sufficient as evidence of competency)
Auditory surveys	Banding birds (this training is monitored by the ABBBS so this is sufficient as evidence of competency)
Spotlighting of arboreal or large mammals	Bleeding or other invasive techniques
Elliott trapping or pitfall trapping for small mammals and lizards under the direct supervision of a competent person	Independent trapping of small mammals and lizards
Capturing and handling wildlife under the direct supervision of a competent person	Independent capture and handling of wildlife

*Individual states and territories may have specific requirements for training and competency assessment that must be followed. More information on specific requirements is available through local state/territory departments, and you may consult with the Ethics Team for further advice.*

## Designated trainers and assessors

Individuals selected to deliver training and assess competence must be considered for their ability to prepare training sessions and materials. Trainers should ensure the mode of delivery and group size is appropriate for the skill being taught.

Those who deliver training must be competent in the procedure they are training. In addition, trainers must complete a Trainer and Assessor Competency Assessment, or be suitably qualified and be listed as a trainer on an approved Training and Assessment Plan. If trainers are not able to have their technique reassessed due to minimal number of other personnel trained in the procedure, a veterinarian or other trained and competent individual can assess technique every three years to minimise procedural drift.

A veterinarian may be available to assist with some training and assessment of specialised techniques. Where the veterinary team may not be skilled in a particular technique, they are still able to assess an individual's approach by assessing the basic approach and the impact on the animal.

Where training and assessment in a procedure is delivered by multiple people, trainers must regularly collaborate, ensuring a standardised training program is followed to avoid procedural drift, and promote continuous improvement to best practice.

## Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Principal (Responsible) Investigator to ensure each person working with animals on their project is adequately trained and deemed competent for the procedures they undertake and maintain training and competency assessment records. Each team member is also responsible for seeking training and re-training where they may have lost confidence, have not performed a technique in some time, or ahead of certification expiry.

## Record keeping

[Training and competency record templates](#) are available on the [Training and competencies webpage](#). Records must be maintained by the Principal (Responsible) Investigator for each team member associated with an approved project. These records must be made available to the AEC as part of an animal ethics application. Additionally, all individuals should keep a record of their own training and competencies. Training and competency records for all animal procedures must also be made available to audit by the Integrity and Ethics team or auditors upon request.

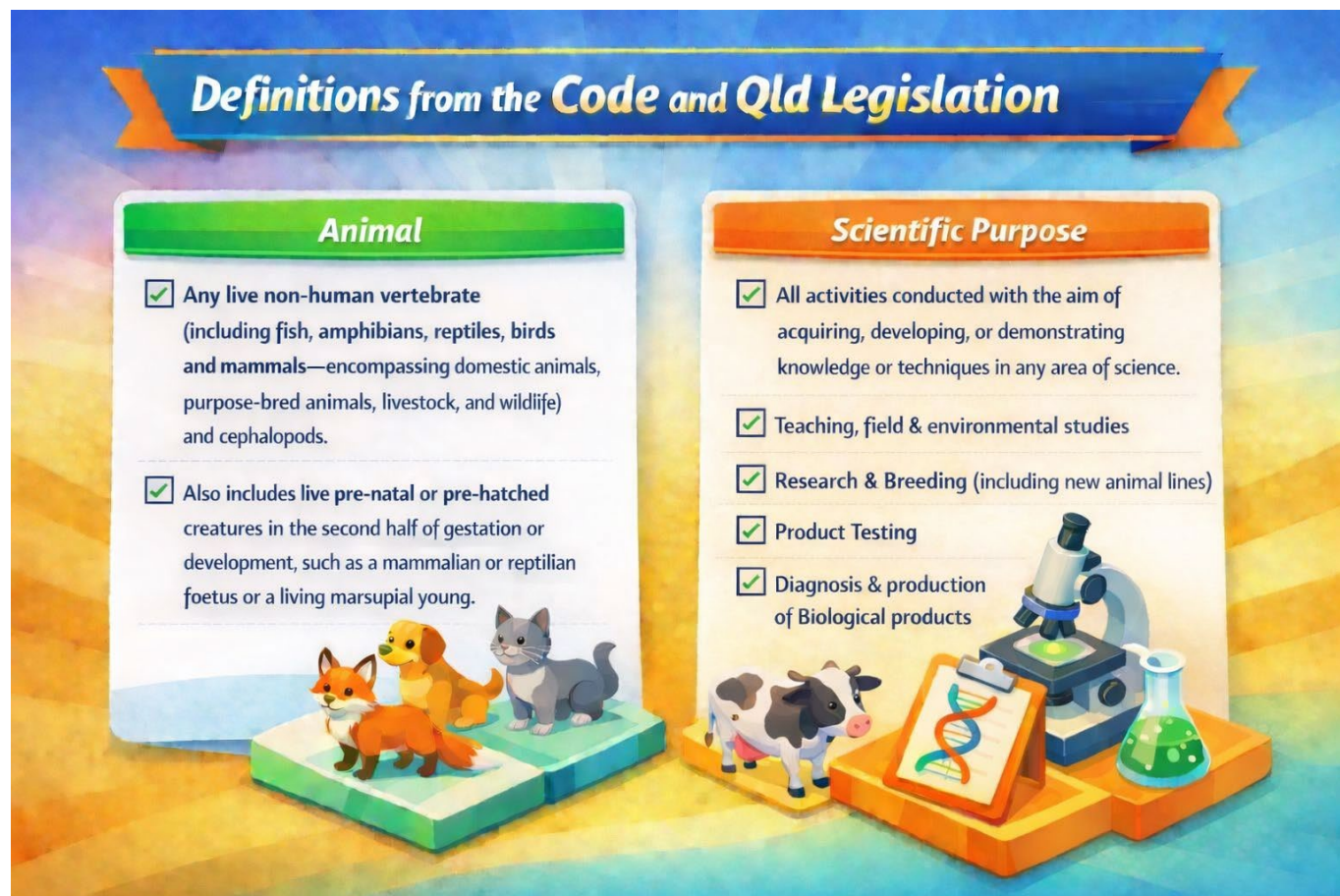
## Additional training

Investigators working in particular fields or using particular tools or procedures will need to complete the required competency, qualifications or licence requirements. For example, use of [drones](#), boating, field work requirements, etc.

# Application and review process

## Do I need ethics approval?

The Code requires that all use of animals for scientific purposes undergo ethical review, regardless of the potential impact on the animals involved. The University does not accept applications from individuals external to the University if they have no UniSQ affiliation.



Any Member of UniSQ who wishes to use legally defined animals or tissue at UniSQ, at another institution or in the field, for scientific purposes is required to obtain written animal ethics approval prior to any acquirement, breeding or use of animals. No animal may be held, bred or used for any scientific purpose until written approval has been obtained from the AEC.

UniSQ researchers collaborating within other institutions also require approval from the UniSQ AEC as well as the animal ethics committee of the other institution(s). If the Research involves the use of animals interstate or overseas there may be a requirement for additional state licensing to be undertaken by the University.

If you have determined that your planned activity falls outside the scope of the Code (and your activity will involve the use of animal tissues and/or use of animals that aren't animals under the relevant legislation and/or use of animals for a non-scientific purpose and/or non-use of animals

(observations only)) you are encouraged to complete an exemption application. Further information on this process is available on the animal ethics webpage.

*At the University of Southern Queensland, all work involving animals, cadaver animals, and cadaveric animal tissue must be assessed and appropriate approvals obtained before commencing.*

You may request an exemption if your activity is described by one or more of the following:

- The activity only involves the use of animals that are not legally defined as an animal in the state or territory in which the work will be undertaken, e.g. insects.
- The activity does not involve the USE of an animal AND the activity does not involve the abnormal disruption of habitat e.g. walking, remaining or driving in places to which people typically have that type of access, such as public or national parks, tracks, roadsides and farmland. Examples of where an activity does not involve the USE of an animal are below:
  - Observing visually, e.g. bird watching and whale watching from a public beach using the naked eye or binoculars. This does not include spotlighting.
  - Taking photographs or recordings (sound or digital). This does not include baited camera traps.
  - Use of unbaited camera traps.
  - Roost exit count survey for bats.
  - Use of passive acoustic monitoring equipment (without call playback).
  - Collection of animal scats or shed feathers (where collection does not involve handling an animal).
  - Recording animal tracks using shallow sand pans.
- The activity only uses organs or other material from animals killed as part of routine commercial food and fibre production (e.g. sourced from butchers, fish shops or abattoirs).
- The activity only uses cadavers or samples from animals euthanised at veterinary clinics or shelters from other veterinary or management reasons.
- The activity only uses of samples from animals euthanised as part of a routine, unmodified pest animal control program.
- The activity only uses of cadavers or samples from animals found dead, e.g. roadkill.
- The activity only uses of tissue samples stored in laboratories from animals whose care and euthanasia has already been approved and monitored as part of an earlier AEC approved activity.
- The animal activity is conducted for a non-scientific purpose (e.g. wildlife displays at schools or livestock displays at agricultural shows, animal display at a birthday party, guide dogs being used to raise funds, fish tagging, bird banding and diagnosis by a veterinarian within routine veterinary practice, or biosecurity inspectors undertaking a disease response).

## Process for exemption requests

To determine whether your activity qualifies for an exemption:

1. Email the [Ethics Team](#) with a brief description of your proposed work.
2. The Ethics Team will assess your request and notify you of eligibility.
3. The Ethics Team will provide guidance on the appropriate application process.

## Making an application

All new animal research/teaching applications must be created and submitted using RISE Ethics Monitor online system.

1. Create and submit
  - Log in to [Ethics Monitor](#) within RISE to start a new application.
  - Refer to meeting dates for submission timelines
2. Initial review
  - The [Ethics Team](#) will review your submission to ensure:
    - All key information is included
    - Supporting documents are attached
  - The item will then be referred to the appropriate review pathway.
  - you will receive an automated system email confirming the review pathway.
3. Jurisdiction check
  - If your scientific activities will be conducted in an Australian state or territory outside Queensland, contact the Ethics Team to confirm UniSQ holds a current registration in that jurisdiction.

Types of submissions reviewed by UniSQ AEC:

- Research applications
- Teaching applications
- Major amendment requests
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- Milestone reports

## Advice for the preparation of your application

When preparing and submitting your application:

- Familiarise yourselves with the principles outlined in the *Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes*.
- If you're a student, have your Supervisor review your submission
- Ensure all team members have undertaken the mandatory [Animal Care and Use Training](#) course and arranged any specialist training as required, and create a [training and competency record](#) for all team members.
- Find a suitable person outside the project team to provide an independent [Peer review](#) of your application
- Submit on or before the UniSQ [AEC submission deadline](#). Refer to the published meeting dates for timelines.

## Guide to the application form

### Data Management

All research projects must have completed a [Research Data Management Plan](#) (RDMP). Ensure you describe how data will be managed during and after the research project.

Research Data must be stored in one primary location and two back-up locations. Refer to the University's [Research Data and Primary Materials Management Procedure](#) to ensure your proposed practice is suitable.

If you have any questions relating to data management planning, refer to the [Library's resources](#) and contact the [Research Support Team](#) if you need assistance with your data management plan.

Note: All Research Data Management Plans are completed online within RISE and linked to the relevant animal research/teaching application.

### Risk Management Plan

Some research or teaching projects may require an approved UniSQ Risk Management Plan (RMP) prior to commencement.

A RMP can be completed within the Safety Risk Management System available via [Safety Central](#).

You will be required to upload the RMP and reference the RMP approval number in your application.

### Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

A **Standard Operating Procedure** (SOP) is a detailed description of a standardised procedure or process.

The UniSQ AEC allows for SOPs relating to the care and use of animals to be submitted for review separately to project applications.

Investigators can reference UniSQ AEC approved SOPs in an application negating the need to describe a procedure repeatedly.

*An SOP is required to be reviewed by the UniSQ AEC within three years of the last approval date.*

The UniSQ AEC encourages the use of SOPs where possible as it decreases the time required for application preparation and decreases the UniSQ AEC review time.

Approved [Standard Operating Procedures](#) are available from the UniSQ website.

Refer to the [Standard Operating Procedures webpage](#) for a template if you planning to develop a new SOP.

## Tips when preparing an application

Preparing a clear and accurate application is essential for effective decision making by the UniSQ AEC. Follow these guidelines to ensure your submission meets ethical and procedural requirements.

### Provide the right information

- Tailor responses to address ethical concerns directly, clearly, and concisely.
- Avoid copying text from other documents, such as grant proposals:
  - Grant proposals focus on scientific merit, funding justification, and broader research goals.
  - Animal ethics applications focus on ethical and welfare implications
- Your application should clearly explain:
  - Why the project is necessary
  - Why animal use is required (address the 3Rs – Replacement, Reduction, Refinement)
  - What will happen to individual or groups of animals over the course of the project
  - The impact on animal wellbeing
  - How pain and distress will be monitored, avoided, or minimised
  - Why your project team competent and appropriately trained.

### Write plainly and concisely

- Use plain language:
  - Avoid jargon and complex descriptions
  - Define abbreviations and acronyms
- Avoid ambiguity:

- Use definitive language (e.g., “will” instead of “might”)
- Be specific about timing (e.g., blood will be collected three days later”)
- Provide exact details:
  - Volume doses (e.g., “0.5ml”).
  - Injection sites (e.g., “intraperitoneal”)
  - Frequency (e.g., “once daily for five days”).

### **Ensure clarity**

- Provide a step-by-step description of what will happen to the animals from the start to conclusion:
  - Animal sourcing and transport
  - Acclimatisation procedures
  - Experimental procedures (number and timing per animal)
  - Potential effects after each procedure
  - Monitoring and pain relief
  - Final fate of the animals

### **Justification and minimisation of numbers**

- Justify the need for animal use thoroughly
- Justify numbers based on experimental design, not cost or convenience
- Use statistical power analysis to determine appropriate sample sizes and consult a statistician
- Demonstrate consideration of the 3Rs:
  - Efforts to replace animal use
  - Strategies to reduce numbers
  - Modifications to refine procedures

### **Incorporate Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)**

- Refer to approved UniSQ SOPs wherever possible
- SOPs streamline application preparation and reduce review time
- Templates for new SOPs are available on the UniSQ website and within the [General | UniSQ AEC - Researchers and Teachers | Microsoft Teams](#)

### **Use guidance notes**

- The RISE Monitor online forms include embedded tips.
  - Click the information icon next to questions for supporting information on how to address the question.

### **Be consistent**

- Ensure numbers and details match throughout the application
- Inconsistencies can delay review and require resubmission

- The AEC cannot interpret discrepancies or assume intent; they must seek clarification.

### **Proofread and peer review**

- Review your application carefully
- Ask others to review for clarity and completeness

### **Submit by the deadline**

- Ensure your application is submitted on or before the UniSQ AEC submission deadline.

## **How to make submissions in Ethics Monitor**

All submissions related to animal ethics must be made through the RISE Ethics Monitor online system. Below are the steps for different submission types:

### How to submit a Prior Approval

1. **Log in to Ethics Monitor**
2. Select **'Start New Ethics Application'**
3. In the **'Overview'** tab, answer **'Yes'** to the question:  
"Do you have approval from another Ethics Committee to conduct this project?"

### How to submit an Amendment

*(For applications approved in RISE Ethics Monitor from January 2023.)*

1. Log in to [Ethics Monitor](#)
2. Navigate to the most current version of the approved application you wish to amend.
3. On the application homepage, select 'Submit an amendment'
4. Complete and submit the form

### How to submit an Unexpected Adverse Event Report

*(For applications approved in RISE Ethics Monitor from January 2023.)*

1. Log in to [Ethics Monitor](#)
2. Navigate to the most current version of the approved application.
3. On the application homepage, select 'Report an adverse event'
4. Complete and submit the form.

### How to submit an annual or final milestone report

*(For applications approved in RISE Ethics Monitor from January 2023.)*

1. Log in to Ethics Monitor
2. Navigate to the most current version of the approved application.
3. On the application homepage, select 'Report a milestone'
4. complete and submit the form.

## Additional application guidance

This section provides important requirements and resources to support the preparation of your animal ethics application.

### HDR Student requirements

- **Confirmation of Candidature** must be completed before submitted your application.
- Provide evidence of completion (e.g., email from the Graduate Research School confirming successful candidature).
- Attach this evidence in response to the question regarding peer review of your project.

**Note:** *We do not need to see your confirmation of candidature submission.*

### Research data management

- **Create a Research Data Management Plan (RDMP)** – Specific information about where your data will be stored and how it will be managed is required in your ethics application. An RDMP should be completed within [RISE - Repository](#) and in accordance with the [Research Data and Primary Materials Management Procedure](#).

RDMPs completed in RISE will auto-populate the relevant questions in the ethics application. It is recommended to complete the RDMP in RISE as this will guide you to provide the necessary information for the ethics review.

- If you have any questions relating to **research data management planning**, refer to the [Research Data Management Plan Guide](#) and the [Library Research Support](#) webpage.
- For **data storage options** refer to [UniSQ's supported research data storage facilities](#). Further information and assistance can be found on the [eResearch webpage](#) and [eResearch SharePoint site](#).
- For **minimum retention periods** specific to your research project, refer to the [University Sector Retention and Disposal Schedule \[601.2/C111\]](#).

## Risk management planning

- Some research projects may require a **Risk Management Plan (RMP)**, particularly when activities involve travel to rural or remote areas, international travel for data collection, or other potentially hazardous activities.
- RMPs must be created using [SafeTrak](#), which is a separate platform from your ethics application and RDMP. Please contact [UniSQ Safety](#) for any question relating to RMPs – this process is not handled by the Office of Research.

## Digital tools and AI software

- Consider what **online software or AI tools** you might want to use as part of your project.
- **Use UniSQ approved and recommended tools** – Before using any online digital or AI tools for data collection, storage, sharing, and/or processing (including tools for transcription or data analysis) **you must ensure they are approved by [UniSQ Information Technology and Digital Services \(ITDS\)](#)**.
  - Using approved tools helps protect the **privacy, security, and integrity** of your research data.
  - We recommend referring to the [Cloud Computing Use Inherent Risk Schedule](#) for a clear matrix outlining which cloud services are acceptable for use in Research.
  - **Software and AI tools approved for use are provided below:**
    - **Data storage and sharing:** [eResearch Services](#).
    - **Data analysis:** [Copilot](#) (whilst signed in with your UniSQ credentials).
  - For additional guidance on secure and approved digital tools, visit the [ITDS Cyber Safety webpage](#) or contact [ITDS Client Support](#) for further information and advice.

**Note:** *If you want to trial or use new software or AI tools for research purposes, please refer to the [Software Vetting Knowledge Article](#). Vetting requests can be made via the [ITDS Technology Solutions Advice Service Hub form](#).*

## Mandatory peer review

- Before submitting your ethics application, **it must undergo a Peer Review process**. This step is essential to ensure your research proposal is well-developed.
- Why is Peer Review required?
  - At UniSQ, Peer Review is a **mandatory requirement** that confirms your Research has merit and that your application is sufficiently completed.
    - *It provides oversight of method and research design by a discipline expert.*

- *It helps ensure your submission meets the standards expected by the ethics reviewers.*
  - The process can also **help identify overlooked details** that may be missed due to your familiarity with the project.
    - *Addressing these early can reduce the number of revisions requested during the local authoriser, administration or ethics review processes, streamlining your path to approval.*
- The **Peer Review checklist** specifically for animal ethics applications and further information about the process are located under, [Applications and Reports](#).

## Support and resources

- **Student support** – If you're a student, **seek support and guidance from your supervisor/s** when drafting your application. You're not expected to complete it alone.
- The [animal ethics webpages](#) – If you are unsure where to start or what steps to take, the animal ethics webpages house all ethics-related resources, including templates, SOPs and guidance notes.

## Writing your application

All applications for ethics must be made in the [UniSQ RISE – Ethics Monitor platform](#). As you progress through the form, the system builds your application based on your responses, ensuring that only applicable questions are presented, and irrelevant ones are eliminated. Due to the form's dynamic nature, **Word versions of the application are not available**. However, you can complete the application at your own pace - it does not need to be completed in one sitting. Just remember to **save regularly**.

## Responding to application questions

- **Provide a complete, detailed and definitive responses**
  - **Address each question in full** – Take time to carefully read and understand each question in its entirety.
  - **Avoid brief responses** – Where large or expandable response boxes are provided, such as the one below, detailed responses are required. **One- or two-word responses are not sufficient** and may result in requests for further information, delaying the review process.
  - **Provide specific details within the context of your project** – vague or generic responses are not sufficient.

- **Do not redirect** – Do not refer readers to another response or to an uploaded document to answer a question. A complete response is required where the question is being asked.
- **Not applicable?** – If a *required field* appears not to apply to your project, do not simply write ‘N/A’. Instead, provide a brief explanation to justify why the question is not relevant in your context. This helps the committee understand your reasoning and ensures your application remains complete.
- Responses with **‘TBA’ will not be accepted** – definitive details must be provided.

## Using guidance notes

- **Refer to the guidance notes ( )** – These are available at certain questions throughout the application.
  - These notes provide clarification, definitions, and tips for addressing requirements correctly.
  - Reading the notes before answering will significantly improve the quality of your responses.

## Reference current literature

- When completing the ‘Aims and Significance’ page, **include references to the current literature** to support your:
  - Research justification
  - Methodology
  - Choice of species, model or procedures
  - This strengthens your justification for scientific merit and demonstrates an awareness of existing Research.

## Writing style and language

- **Write clearly and in plain English** – AEC membership is diverse and includes those without any scientific background.
- **Avoid jargon and technical terms** – if specific terminology is necessary, ensure it is clearly defined.
- **Write acronyms out in full** in the first instance and use them sparingly.

## Required documents

- Make sure you **upload all necessary documents** in the specified sections of your application, including:

- **Peer Review Checklist** – this must be completed and signed by a peer reviewer.
- Any **other procedures** – including non-UniSQ SOPs or discipline-specific research methods
- Evidence of **training and competency** for all team members

## Technical aspects of the application

### Supervisor endorsement process

- **Students must not be listed as the Principal Investigator** of a project within the ethics application. This **role must be filled by the Principal Supervisor** to facilitate the supervisor endorsement process. Student must be listed as a ‘Co-Investigator (Student)’.
  - If you are **UniSQ Staff** but are conducting the Research in a **student capacity**, you **must list yourself as ‘Co-Investigator (Student)’** with your Supervisor listed as Principal Investigator.
- **Principal Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that student research is conducted in accordance with UniSQ policies and the Code.** Before submission, the Principal Supervisor should review the entire application, including all participant information and consent forms. Acting as the Principal Investigator, the Supervisor then submits the application on behalf of the student, confirming their endorsement.

### Local Authoriser (Head of School/Centre) review

Once the Principal Investigator submits the application it is forwarded to local authoriser for review and endorsement before it is considered submitted to the Ethics Team. The following should be noted:

- **Overview page** - Ensure to **provide the correct response to the ‘host department’** question. This should be the school, centre or department where your research project is based.
  - **If you are a staff member who is conducting Research as a student**, ensure to indicate the school where you are placed as a student, **not your staff role.**
  - Based on the response provided to this question, upon submission, the system will automatically direct your application to the relevant Head of School/Centre for local authoriser review and endorsement before it is submitted to the Ethics Team.

**Note:** *Your application is not considered submitted to the Ethics Team until it has been endorsed by the local authoriser. It is your responsibility to allow sufficient time for this step and to monitor the progress of this process – check the **timeline page of your ethics application record itself** not the Ethics Monitor home page listing all your applications.*

## Completing the RDMP from within the ethics application

- **Operational Items page** – You can **access and complete the RDMP** from within the ethics application itself by selecting ‘**Complete RDMP here**’ under the ‘*Managing Data*’ subheading. Accessing it this way ensures the RDMP will be linked correctly.
  - Once an RDMP has been completed the required fields for ethics review will automatically populate into the ethics application. This replaces the open text response field that exists when no RDMP has been completed.

**Note:** *If the completed RDMP fields do not populate into the ethics form, this means it is not correctly link to the ethics application. Please contact the Ethics Team or log a [RISE Service Hub Request](#).*

## Submission timelines

Refer to the [UniSQ AEC meeting dates](#) to ensure you meet submission deadlines and allow time for:

- Supervisor review and endorsement
- Local authoriser review
- Administrative checks prior to AEC review

## AEC decisions

An AEC application can only be reviewed at a quorate meeting of the UniSQ AEC.

The UniSQ AEC reviewers will provide one the of the following review outcomes on applications and amendments:

Table 4. Understanding review outcomes

Review Outcome	What this means
<b>Approved</b>	No changes are required. No additional requirements/conditions Project is approved to commence.
<b>Approved with additional conditions</b>	Project is approved to commence but includes extra <b>conditions</b> e.g. Project must not commence until any necessary licences are approved and advice provided to the Ethics Team.
<b>Subject to modifications</b>	This outcome includes written feedback that is provided for addressing and/or defending.

	The revised project and response to feedback is submitted to the UniSQ AEC Executive or UniSQ AEC Chair for final review and recommendation of approval.
<b>Not approved (re-submission permitted)</b>	This outcome includes written feedback that is provided for addressing and/or defending with the review project. An updated application is resubmitted and reviewed by a future UniSQ AEC meeting.
<b>Not approved (re-submission not permitted)</b>	This outcome includes written feedback that is provided. However, a new application is required to be submitted and reviewed by the UniSQ AEC.

The AEC reviews applications using both objective and subjective criteria:

- **Objective/Logical:** The application must comply with relevant legislation, the Australian Code, and institutional policies and procedures.
- **Subjective/Emotional:** The application must also be ethically acceptable to committee members, based on their individual life experiences, education, values, and philosophies.

### Approval Requirements

- Work must not commence until you receive a formal Approval Notification from the AEC.
- Approved with additional conditions outcome is *not* final approval—no work or amendments may begin until the final notice is issued.

## Student research

In the case of a student research project, the Supervisor is the Principal and Responsible Investigator with the student named as a Co-Investigator (UniSQ Student).

## Undergraduate teaching projects

When developing animal-based undergraduate teaching activities, applications must:

Include clear details of the following:

- the maximum number of students per teacher (to ensure adequate supervision);
- the minimum and maximum number of animals per student;
- the maximum number of times each animal will be used; and
- how achievement of educational objectives will be assessed (as required under the Code).

The Code details responsibilities associated with the care and use of animals for the achievement of educational outcomes in science in Section 4 (Clauses 4.1 – 4.17).

The Code requires that Institutions ensure that animals are used for teaching only when their use is essential to achieve an educational outcome in science, as specified in the relevant curriculum or competency requirements, and suitable alternatives to replace the use of animals to achieve the educational outcome are not available.

Teachers should make ethical guidelines such as the ANZCCART publication *Australian Ethical Guidelines for Students in Laboratory Classes Using Animals or Animal Tissues* available to students and ensure they have the opportunity to discuss the ethical and social issues, and legal responsibilities, involved in the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, before the use of animals commences (Clause 4.12).

## Conscientious Objection

Students who raise a conscientious objection to participating in animal-based activities should be supported.

- Complaints relating to conscientious objection should be directed to the Senior Manager, Research Integrity and Ethics.
- For teaching activities, the matter will be referred to the relevant Course Coordinator for management and resolution.

This process aligns with UniSQ's compliance expectations and ensures students' concerns are handled within appropriate governance structures.

# Animal wellbeing

## Strategies to support and safeguard animal wellbeing

The planning and conduct of activities involving the care and use of animals must actively support and safeguard animal wellbeing throughout the entire duration of their involvement. This reflects the Code's core principles of respect for animals, the 3Rs and a duty of care.

To ensure animal wellbeing is protected, investigators must:

- **Identify potential impacts**
- Identify all known and potential causes of adverse impact on animal wellbeing
- Consider both intended effects (e.g., experimental procedures) and unforeseen or unintended consequences.
- Assess risks at every stage – from acquisition and transport to final fate

### Avoid or minimise adverse impact

- Implement strategies to avoid harm where possible and minimise it where unavoidable.
- Establish clear intervention points and humane endpoints in line with best practice and the Code requirements
- Ensure animals are monitored at an appropriate frequency based on species, procedures and potential risks

### Monitor and review strategies

- Regularly review the effectiveness of welfare strategies, monitoring practices, and refinement measures
- Modify procedures or welfare strategies immediately if monitoring indicates that wellbeing is compromised
- Demonstrate continuous improvement, as required under the Code's refinement principle

### Implement changes when needed

- Make timely changes when existing strategies are no longer sufficient to protect animal wellbeing
- Report unexpected adverse events promptly and apply corrective actions
- Ensure any welfare concerns raised are addressed appropriately, reflecting institutional commitments to compliance and quality assurance.

### Ensure awareness of responsibilities

- Ensure all personnel involved in animal care and use:

- Are training and competent
- Understand their responsibilities for safeguarding animal wellbeing
- Know how to recognise signs of pain, distress or poor welfare
- Known how to report concerns or welfare risks

This collaborative approach ensures that animal wellbeing is protected consistently and comprehensively throughout the project's lifecycle.

*Animal wellbeing must be considered across the animal's entire lifetime experience—from acquisition through to the conclusion of use.*

## Animal care and management

To safeguard animal wellbeing and ensure activities meet the requirements of their proposed use, investigators must implement appropriate procedures for the care, management and monitoring of all animals involved.

These requirements reflect Clause 3.1.8 of the Code.

- monitoring and assessment of animals by a competent person with sufficient frequency to ensure that sick or injured animals are promptly detected and identified, and that appropriate action is taken
- provision of veterinary clinical care and advice
- prompt detection and effective management of disease outbreaks and emergencies such as fire, power failure and biosafety issues
- preventive protocols under veterinary direction or supervision, as appropriate, including animal biosecurity; quarantine; and the surveillance, diagnosis, treatment and control of diseases.

Wildlife must not be taken from their natural habitats or otherwise disturbed unless it is essential for the work proposed and no alternative source of animals or data is available. Practices to minimise the transmission of pathogens between animals and between sites must be implemented.

## Supporting and safeguarding the wellbeing of animals during the conduct of specific procedures

### Conduct of procedures

All procedures involving animals must be planned and carried out in a way that protects their wellbeing.

Procedures must:

- be appropriate for the species and the circumstances
- be compatible with the purpose and aims of the project or activity
- be in accord with current best practice
- cause the least harm, including pain and distress, to the animals
- be performed competently, and by a person who is competent for the procedures, or under the direct supervision of a person who is competent to perform the procedures.

Routine husbandry procedures must be performed competently, and by a person who is competent for the procedures, or by a person under the direct supervision of a person who is competent to perform the procedures. Routine husbandry procedures are not part of a project and include, for example, clipping coats and nails, and vaccinations.

Methods used to identify animals must:

- be appropriate for the species and the circumstances
- be compatible with the purpose and aims of the project or activity
- involve non-invasive methods whenever possible. The use of invasive methods must conform with Clause 3.3.1
- cause the least harm, including pain and distress, to the animals

When performing injections, blood sampling and non-surgical procedures, procedures used must:

- minimise the risk of an animal developing complications (e.g. tissue damage, infection, haematoma, bleeding)
- be performed under aseptic conditions if there is a potential risk of infection
- include management of the effects of tissue rejection and immunosuppression if the procedure involves the transplantation of cells or tissues

The use of local and general anaesthetics, analgesics and sedatives must be considered as part of a plan to manage pain and distress, and such use should at least parallel their use in current veterinary or medical practice.

Animals that develop signs of pain and distress must be treated promptly, in accordance with the intervention points and humane endpoints approved by the animal ethics committee, and UniSQ and AEC policies and procedures.

The wellbeing of wildlife must be supported and safeguarded by using methods, techniques and equipment that:

- are appropriate for the species and the situation, and the purpose and aims of the project or activity
- minimise the risk of transmission of disease, and direct and indirect disturbance to the habitat

The wellbeing of wildlife must also be supported and safeguarded by avoiding or minimising harm, including pain and distress to target and non-target species, to dependent young and from indirect effects arising from impact on the habitat and environment.

## Capture and handling

To minimise the risk of injury or stress-induced disease, procedures for the capture and handling of wildlife must include:

- the involvement of a sufficient number of competent people to restrain animals in a quiet environment and prevent injury to animals and handlers
- chemical restraint (e.g. sedatives) where appropriate, if the period of handling is likely to cause harm, including pain and distress, to animals
- restraint and handling of animals for the minimum time needed to achieve the purpose and aims of the project or activity
- making provisions for captured animals that are ill or injured, including treatment of pain and distress.

## Use of traps

If trapping is used to capture wildlife, the wellbeing of both target and non-target animals must be protected at all times. This includes careful selection, placement, operation and monitoring of traps to minimise harm, distress and environmental impacts.

- selecting a trap that is suited to the species and the circumstances, and designed to ensure protection of trapped animals from injury, predators, parasites and environmental extremes
- monitoring traps to minimise the time animals will spend in traps, and to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on trapped animals
- minimising the number of days of continuous trapping within an area, and removing or deactivating traps that are not in use or are no longer required
- minimising the potential adverse impact caused by disrupting social structure, and adverse impacts on dependent young (e.g. by avoiding trapping in the breeding season)
- minimising the numbers of non-target species that are trapped and implementing a management plan for captured non-target species to ensure their wellbeing or ensure that they are humanely killed.

Wet pitfall traps must not be used to capture vertebrate animals. If wet pitfall traps are used to capture invertebrates, they must be managed and monitored to minimise the inadvertent capture of vertebrates, including by locating the trap where vertebrate entry is unlikely and using the smallest possible trap diameter.

## Transport, holding and release

Transport of wildlife must be in accordance with Clauses 3.2.5–3.2.8 of the Code.

If animals are to be held in captivity, the duration must be minimised and consistent with the purpose and aims of the project or activity. If animals are to be released, all possible steps must be taken to avoid their becoming habituated to human activity.

Procedures for any release of wildlife must ensure that:

- release occurs at the site of capture, unless otherwise approved by the AEC
- the timing of release coincides with the period of usual activity for the species, unless safety of the animals is assured by other means, such as release into appropriate cover
- animals are protected from injury and predation at the time of their release
- animals that have been sedated or anaesthetised have recovered to full consciousness before their release. During their recovery, animals should be held in an appropriate area where they can maintain normal body temperature and are protected from injury and predation.

## Tracking the movement of wildlife

When devices are used to track the movement of wildlife, the weight, design and positioning of attached devices must minimise interference with the normal survival requirements of the animal.

Interference activities such as call playback, spotlighting, tiling, rock turning, investigating a nest box and disturbing nest sites must be conducted in a manner that minimises any risk to the wellbeing of the wildlife.

Alternatives to collecting animals as voucher specimens (eg. tissue samples, digital photography) must be considered, where appropriate. When animals are collected as voucher specimens:

- the number taken must be the minimum required for identification or to establish distribution
- the specimens must be appropriately documented and lodged with an institution that manages a publicly accessible reference collection.

## Studies involving vertebrate pest animals

The principles of the Code must be applied equally to animals that are considered to be pests.

Captive feral and pest species must be killed humanely unless the aims of a project require their release, or the study involves death as an endpoint.

The method and procedures used for killing an animal must be humane and:

- avoid pain or distress and produce rapid loss of consciousness until death occurs
- be compatible with the purpose and aims of the project or activity

- be appropriate to the species, age, developmental stage and health of the animal
- require minimum restraint of the animal
- be reliable, reproducible and irreversible
- ensure that animals are killed in a quiet, clean environment away from other animals
- ensure that death is established before disposal of the carcass, fetuses, embryos and fertilised eggs

Dependent offspring of animals to be killed must be cared for or humanely killed.

## **Provisions for animals at the conclusion of their use**

Provisions for animals at the conclusion of their use must be made promptly and in accordance with the animal ethics committee (AEC) approval.

Provisions may include:

- rehousing (rehoming) (see Code Clauses 3.4.2–3.4.3)
- return to normal husbandry conditions or natural habitat (see Code Clauses 3.4.4–3.4.5)
- humane killing (see Code Clauses 3.3.45–3.3.46)
- reuse (see Code Clauses 1.22, 1.24 and 2.3.15)
- tissue sharing (see Code Clauses 1.26, 2.4.24 and 2.5.10)

*Refer to Section 3 of the Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes for more detailed animal wellbeing information.*

# Conducting projects

Investigators must conduct all aspects of a project in accordance with the conditions and requirements of the UniSQ AEC approval and any subsequent amendments approved by the UniSQ AEC. They also must ensure that procedures involving animals are performed competently. The conduct of a project must cease if approval from the UniSQ AEC is suspended or withdrawn.

## Animal monitoring

Each AEC approval will have its own requirements for animal monitoring. Animal wellbeing must be monitored by competent people at all stages and sites of animal care and use and records maintained. Prompt action must be taken based on the monitoring and assessment of animal wellbeing, in accordance with intervention points and humane endpoints approved by the AEC.

Investigators must ensure that the scope of monitoring the wellbeing of the animals at all stages of their care and use in the project is clearly outlined and communicated to all parties. Depending on the type of project, this may include monitoring by animal carers.

Projects that involve the trapping of wildlife also require the monitoring of captured animals. The period of captivity should be as short as practically possible. Animals held for longer durations require (at a minimum) daily observations of their behaviour, activity levels and food and water levels. Observations should be recorded on a monitoring record sheet tailored to the expected project-related health outcomes.

## Project records

Investigators are responsible for maintaining all project records including:

details of the origin and source of each animal

- the number of animals used
- details of procedures (including dates, substances administered and unexpected outcomes)
- condition of each animal
- investigators performing procedures and accessing the records
- details of who is responsible for monitoring and emergency incidents

If an activity involves genetically modified animals, the records must include:

- the number of animals used for the creation and maintenance of genetically modified animals

*The Ethics Team, UniSQ AEC or an auditor may request to review project records at any time.*

## Amendments

Additional approval must be sought from and granted by the UniSQ AEC prior to implementing any proposed change to the way in which an Animal is cared for or used for Scientific Purposes which varies from that which was originally approved by the UniSQ AEC.

To seek an amendment to an existing UniSQ AEC approval for the care and use of Animals for Scientific Purposes, the Principal Investigator is responsible for submission of an amendment application.

In accordance with 2.2.23 of the Code, the UniSQ AEC has established an Animal Ethics Committee Executive. The UniSQ AEC has delegated to the AEC Executive the authority to review and approve minor amendments to approved projects or activities, with any decisions to be ratified at the next UniSQ AEC meeting.

A minor amendment may include a change to an approved project or activity where the proposed change is not likely to cause harm to the animals, including pain and distress. All major amendments will be referred to the UniSQ AEC for review and approval.

The UniSQ AEC Executive or UniSQ AEC Chair must not approve any new applications.

Examples of ‘minor’ and ‘major’ amendment requests are outlined in the table below:

Table 5. Examples of minor and major amendments

Minor	Major
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• change to personnel (the addition of new researchers to a protocol with evidence of appropriate training)</li> <li>• increase in animals' numbers, where the number of animals requested is &lt;10% of the original animal numbers approved for the project</li> <li>• change in drugs used for pain management (if more effective)</li> <li>• change to the schedule of blood collection but without an increase in the frequency of collections</li> <li>• change to a non-surgical procedure (if less frequent or less invasive)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increase in animal numbers (&gt;10%)</li> <li>• change of strain within species</li> <li>• change in the animal gender</li> <li>• change in the invasiveness of a non-surgical or surgical procedure</li> <li>• change to methods of euthanasia</li> <li>• addition or substitution of a non-surgical or a surgical procedure</li> <li>• addition of a new intervention</li> <li>• change in test compound or drugs used for pain management (other than effectiveness)</li> <li>• change to clinical score sheets/monitoring forms and/or monitoring regime</li> <li>• extension of approval period (more than 3 months)</li> <li>• change in the type of trap/technique used to capture animals</li> </ul>

- extension of approval period (if less than 3 months)
- addition of camera trapping, sand plots or other observational techniques
- addition of a collection of non-invasive samples (i.e. saliva, hair)
- change in the location of study sites
- increase in the number of study sites, where the additional number of animals requested remains within <10% of the original animal numbers approved for the project

## Reporting

As a condition of AEC approval, investigators are required to adhere to the following reporting requirements:

- submit an annual report (milestone) by 31 December for each year of approval
- submit a final report upon project completion or expiry
- providing timely unexpected adverse event reporting
- report on the creation and maintenance of genetically modified animals
- submit any other report the AEC may request

*The annual and final reports include the number of animals that have been used over a period. These numbers are reported to the relevant state regulators, via an animal usage report.*

Within annual and final milestone reports, the following details are required:

- clarify if any animals have been used over the last 12 months or since the last report
- how many animals were used and what species
- if any adverse or unexpected events have occurred
- if any outputs have resulted from the activities undertaken

A project's continuation is determined by the UniSQ AEC upon the review of an annual report. The UniSQ AEC will indicate one of the following review outcomes:

Table 6. Report review outcomes

Outcome	Description
<b>continued</b>	project is approved to continue as per the approval
<b>suspended</b>	the project is on hold until further information is provided, or an investigation is conducted
<b>modified</b>	an amendment to the project is required
<b>discontinued</b>	approval for the project has been withdrawn

*Failure to submit a milestone report may result in the AEC approval being revoked. As such if the project is to continue a new application would be required.*

## Project monitoring

All University activities that involve the care and use of Animals for Scientific Purposes are subject to monitoring by the UniSQ AEC. In line with the Code, the UniSQ AEC may conduct the following monitoring activities:

- inspecting Animals and Animal housing;
- observing the conduct of procedures; and
- reviewing records and reports.

The UniSQ AEC will ensure annual inspections of any and all UniSQ Animal facilities used for the care and use of Animals for Scientific Purposes. The following additional strategies are used to ensure projects do not proceed without ethics approval and to check for projects that may have proceeded in the absence of approval:

- the finance office will not create an account for a Research project that uses Animals without either confirmation of ethics approval or alternative advice from the Office of Research; and
- the Graduate Research School will immediately advise the Office of Research if it appears, at any stage during candidature up to the point of confirmation, that a Higher Degree by Research (HDR) project has proceeded without the required ethics approval.

The UniSQ AEC will determine the appropriate delegation, form (e.g., still or video images) and timelines for inspections of Research undertaken remotely at the time of the UniSQ AEC approval and communicated to the Research team. Investigators may also be invited to present recordings and other monitoring records at AEC meetings. Appropriate reporting methods will be determined by the UniSQ AEC and will form part of the reporting requirements for the approved project.

## Use of privately owned animals

For projects involving the use of privately owned animals (e.g. livestock or companion animals), investigators must:

- ensure that all people involved in the care and use of such animals are aware of and accept their responsibilities relating to the animals
- ensure that people responsible for the daily management of the animals during the project are familiar with and understand the Code, and are competent
- provide the owner of the animal with a document, to be included in the application to the AEC, clearly stating the details and duration of the owner's responsibilities. The owner should acknowledge their acceptance of these responsibilities in writing.

## Activities approved by another AEC

If your project has been approved by an external AEC, you must submit a **Prior Approval** to the UniSQ AEC for ratification.

Make sure to upload the following documents with your submission:

- AEC approval letter or notification
- AEC application (from the approving institution)
- Standard Operating Procedures (if applicable)
- Any additional supporting documents relevant to the project

*In accordance with the Code, Investigators must notify the UniSQ AEC in writing if they are involved in collaborative studies using animals at another institution, or if they are named in an application to the AEC of another institution (in line with clauses 2.4.9 and 2.68 of the*

Investigators intending to conduct collaborative projects or activities with other Australian institutions must ensure a collaboration agreement is in place to ensure that agreement has been reached from all collaborating parties on the following:

- all parties involved are aware of, and can meet, their respective responsibilities under the requirements of the Code;
- a project does not commence before each AEC approves, or the delegate AEC approves activities to be conducted by members of its institution;
- that each AEC will be responsible for approval and monitoring of Animal care and use that occurs at the institution for which it acts;
- the responsible AECs are aware of all aspects of the proposed use of Animals, and consider the cumulative effects on the Wellbeing of the Animals involved;

- the responsible AECs can inspect the Animals so that all phases of the project are monitored, including any transport of Animals between sites;
- Animals will receive appropriate care in all phases of the project, including any transport of Animals between sites; and
- Clear communication channels are established between all AECs and all investigators by way of a collaboration agreement.

Mechanisms for reporting non-compliant activities between institutions and AECs should also be included.

## **Activities that cannot be conducted**

The use of animals for cosmetic testing is banned in Australia. As such, Investigators must not use animals for testing of finished cosmetic products.

Investigators must only consider using animals for testing of a chemical ingredient if such use is justified by a purpose other than use in a cosmetic. Investigators must ensure that the evidence provided in the application to the UniSQ AEC includes the information outlined in Clause 7.6, as appropriate for the circumstances.

# Investigator responsibilities

## Principal (Responsible) Investigator

Each project has a person identified who has ultimate responsibility for the care and use of animals in a project. The Principal (Responsible) Investigator must:

- ensure that all involved in the project understand and accept their roles and responsibilities
- ensure that the procedures and resources are in place so that all people involved in the care and use of animals in the project can meet their responsibilities, including their education, training and supervision, as appropriate
- be competent with respect to the wellbeing of animals used in the project.

*The Principal (Responsible) Investigator does not relieve the individual responsibility of each investigator working with animals in the project.*

## Other Investigators

Investigators have personal responsibility for all matters that relate to the wellbeing of animals that they use, including their housing, husbandry and care. This responsibility extends throughout the period of use approved by the AEC until provisions are made for the animal/s at the conclusions of their use.

Investigators must:

- apply the principles of the [Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes, 8th edition, 2013 \(updated 2021\)](#)
- follow relevant policies and procedures established by the University and the AEC
- apply for and obtain written approval from the AEC before commencing a project (Research or teaching) that involves the use of animals, or an amendment to an approved project
- conduct a project involving the use of animals in accordance with conditions and requirements of the AEC approval
- cease the project if the approval from the AEC is suspended or withdrawn
- undertake education and training, and competency assessment, in accordance with the University and AEC policies and procedures
- ensure the procedures are performed competently
- maintain records of the care and use of animals
- report to the AEC as required
- notify the AEC if they are involved in collaborative studies using animals at another institution, or if they are named on an application to another AEC.



# Unexpected Adverse Events

## Definitions

**Adverse event:** any event that has a negative impact on the wellbeing of an animal.

**Unexpected adverse event:** an event that may have a negative impact on the wellbeing of animals and was not foreshadowed in the approved project or activity:

- Death of an animal, or group of animals, that was not expected (e.g. during surgery or anaesthesia, or after a procedure or treatment)
- Adverse effects following a procedure or treatment that were not expected.
- Adverse events in a larger number of animals than predicted during the planning activity, based on the number of animals actually used, not the number approved for the study.
- Greater level of pain or distress than was predicted during the planning of the project or activity.
- Power failures, inclement weather, emergency situations or other factors external to the project or activity that have a negative impact on the welfare of animals.

## Required Actions

Prompt action must be taken in response to unexpected adverse events and emergencies, including:

- Alleviation of pain and distress, in accordance with institutional and UniSQ AEC policies and procedures.
- Alleviation of pain and distress of severity that was not anticipated in an approved project or activity must take precedence over an individual animal reaching the planned endpoint of the project or activity, or the continuation or completion of the project or activity.
- If necessary, animals must be humanely euthanised without delay.

**Investigators** must:

- take prompt action, including alleviating pain and distress; and
- Principal Investigators must promptly notify the UniSQ AEC, in response to Unexpected Adverse Events and emergencies, within 48 hours of the event occurring using the Unexpected Adverse Event Report form within the [RISE Ethics Monitor system](#).
- The University's Unexpected Adverse Event Decision Tree provides guidance on the course of action to be taken when handling an Unexpected Adverse Event ([Appendix](#)).

When an animal dies unexpectedly, or is humanely killed due to unforeseen complications, a necropsy should be performed by a competent person.

## Review and follow-up requirements

Following an unexpected adverse event, the Principal Investigator must:

- - Review all relevant protocols, procedures, and contributing factors
  - Determine whether modifications, refinements, retraining or increased supervision are required
  - Submit an amendment application to the UniSQ AEC where project changes are necessary
  - Obtain AEC approval before implementing any procedural or protocol changes

### **AEC Responsibilities**

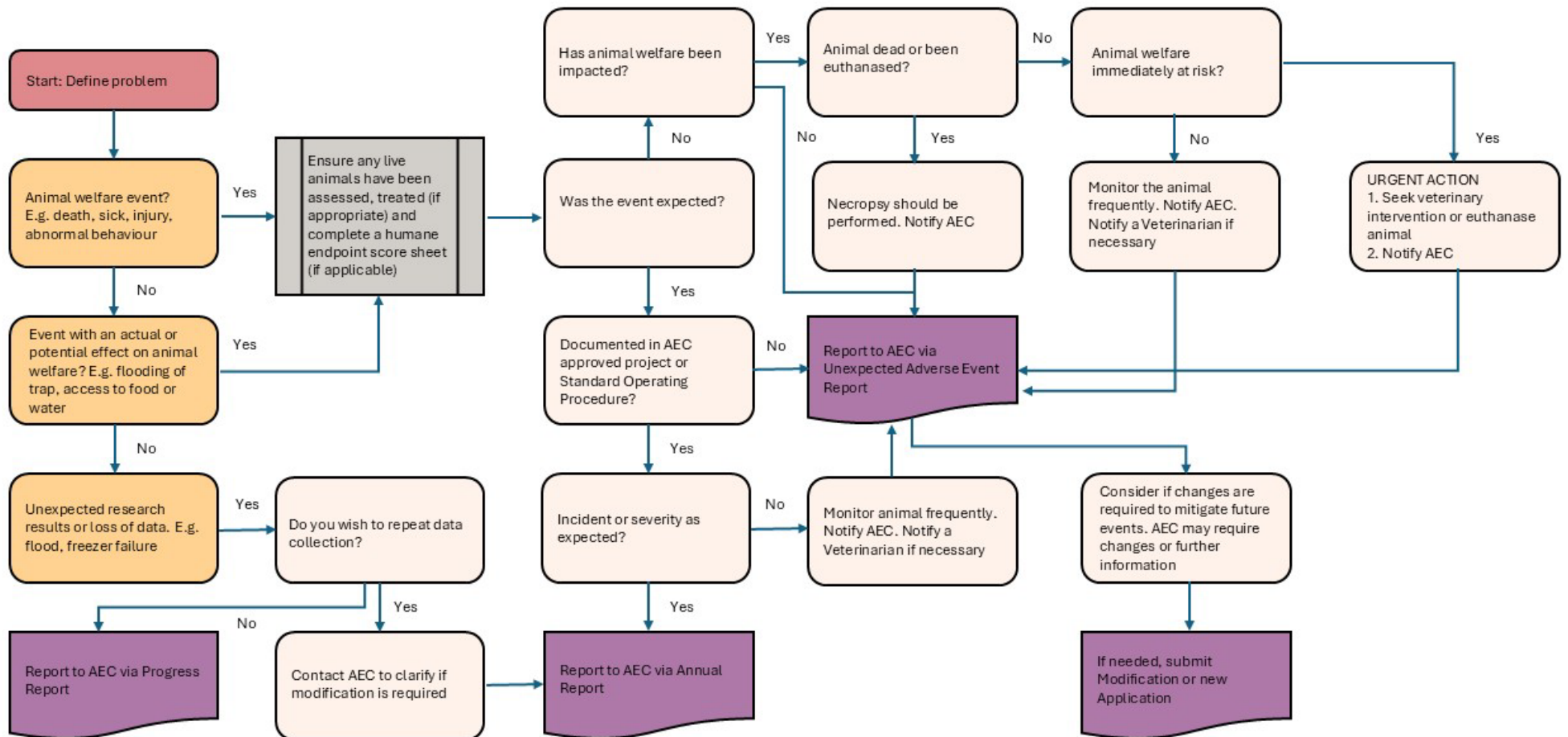
The **UniSQ AEC** must take appropriate and timely action in response to unexpected adverse events to ensure:

- animal wellbeing is not compromised;
- the issue is addressed promptly; and
- activities that have the potential to adversely affect the animal wellbeing cease immediately.

*Alleviating unanticipated pain and distress must take precedence over an individual animal reaching the planned endpoint of the project, or the continuation or completion of the project.*

*If necessary, animals must be humanely euthanised without delay.*

• **Figure 1. UniSQ Unexpected Adverse Event Decision Tree**



# Breaches and complaints

Concerns or complaints about an investigator and/or the ethical conduct of a project can be raised by various parties, including investigators, animal ethics committees, AEC members, members of the public, funding bodies, University staff or students.

If a concern relates to an investigator and/or the ethical conduct of a research project, it should be raised with the UniSQ Animal Ethics Committee via the Senior Research Ethics Advisor email: [animal.ethics@unisq.edu.au](mailto:animal.ethics@unisq.edu.au) or by phone. If a concern or Complaint is raised directly with an Investigator rather than the UniSQ AEC, the matter should be promptly forwarded to the Senior Research Ethics Advisor. The UniSQ AEC will investigate whether the activities were conducted in accordance with UniSQ AEC approval.

The Ethics Team will consider whether the matter should be referred to the Designated Officer for consideration in accordance with the [Research Code of Conduct: Management of Potential Breaches Procedure](#), whether the matter may be resolved informally or if the matter must be referred to the UniSQ AEC.

Failure to comply with the Code, legislative requirements, or UniSQ AEC approval conditions may result in suspension or withdrawal of ethics approval, reporting to regulators, and/or referral under UniSQ's Research Code of Conduct and disciplinary procedures.

*A breach is defined as a failure to meet the principles and responsibilities of the Code and may refer to a single breach or multiple breaches.*

## Activities that would normally require AEC approval

If the matter relates to an activity that would normally require UniSQ AEC approval, the Committee must review the activities in consultation with all relevant people to ensure that the reason for the complaint is addressed. The UniSQ AEC may decide that modification of a project is required, or an approval for a project is suspended or withdrawn.

The UniSQ AEC must ensure that:

- actions are taken to ensure that animal wellbeing is not compromised, the issue is addressed promptly, and activities that have the potential to adversely affect animal wellbeing cease immediately. Actions may include suspending or withdrawing approval for the project or activity
- actions are taken to address the issues in consultation with the person/s involved
- non-compliance receives appropriate follow-up.

If a complaint relates to an activity or project that spans more than one institution and/or AEC the matter will be dealt with on an individual basis per the agreement with that institution, or, if no agreement exists, in negotiation with the other institution.

If the complaint is found to have related to activities not conducted in accordance with an AEC approval, the AEC should also refer the matter to the Designated Officer in accordance with the Research Code of Conduct: Management of Potential Breaches Procedure.

## Appeals and Complaints concerning AEC process of review

Any Principal Investigator wishing to appeal an AEC decision can do so in writing to the Senior Research Ethics Advisor ([animal.ethics@unisq.edu.au](mailto:animal.ethics@unisq.edu.au)). The Senior Research Ethics Advisor will include the appeal in the agenda of the next scheduled AEC meeting, where the Committee will review the appeal. The AEC Chair will inform the Investigator in writing of the outcome of the AEC review of the appeal.

The grounds for appealing a decision made by the UniSQ AEC or UniSQ AEC Executive are:

- due process has not been followed, or
- the views of the Committee cannot be effectively accommodated because of the Committee acting outside of its remit.

Where complaints concerning the AEC process of review of an application or report cannot be resolved by communication between the complainant and the UniSQ AEC the concern should be referred to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) to initiate a review of the process followed by the UniSQ AEC. Following this review, the UniSQ AEC may need to review its process in reaching its decision regarding the application or report and re-evaluate its decision considering the reviewed process. The ultimate decision regarding the ethical acceptability of an activity lies with the UniSQ AEC and must not be overridden (in line with clause 5.6 of the Code).

## Other complaints

If a concern or complaint relates to a teaching or otherwise non-research activity or project that raises the possibility of a breach of the Code, the process outlined in the Enterprise Agreement or [Student General Misconduct Procedure](#) or other relevant policy or procedure will be followed.

Complaints concerning the process for independent external review should be raised with the Senior Manager, Research Integrity and Ethics.

Complaints relating to the conscientious objection of the use of animals for scientific purposes should be directed to the Senior Manager, Research Integrity and Ethics. In the case of teaching activities, the complaint will be progressed to the relevant Course Coordinator.

# Appendix

## Definitions within the Code

**Activity**<sup>1</sup> : any action or group of actions undertaken that involves the care and use of animals, including acquisition, transport, breeding, housing and husbandry of those animals. An activity may involve one or more procedures. Activities are described in an application to the animal ethics committee. See also '[Project](#)'.

**Animal**<sup>2</sup> : under the Queensland Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 (ACPA) a legally defined animal is:

- any live vertebrate (this includes amphibians, birds, fish, mammals (other than humans), reptiles);
- live prenatal or pre-hatched creatures in the last half of gestation or development, including mammalian or reptilian foetuses, prehatched avian, mammalian or reptilian young (eggs)
- live marsupial young;
- a live invertebrate creature of a species, or a stage of the life cycle of a species, from the class Cephalopoda (e.g. octopus, squid, nautilus, cuttlefish);

livestock, companion animals, laboratory animals, wildlife, pests, feral animals and zoo animals.

The following are not considered legally defined animals under the ACPA:

- humans including human foetus;
- the eggs, spat or spawn of fish;
- a pre-natal, larval, or pre-hatched creature, other than those mentioned above;
- another immature form of a creature, other than those mentioned above immature amphibians and fish prior to final metamorphosis (e.g. fish fry and tadpoles).

**Animal welfare**<sup>1</sup> : an animal's quality of life, which encompasses the diverse ways an animal may perceive and respond to their circumstances, ranging from a positive state of wellbeing to a negative state of distress.

**Animal wellbeing**<sup>1</sup> : an animal is in a positive mental state and is able to achieve successful biological function, to have positive experiences, to express innate behaviours, and to respond to and cope with potentially adverse conditions. Animal wellbeing may be assessed by physiological and behavioural measures of an animal's physical and psychological health and of the animal's capacity to cope with stressors, and species-specific behaviours in response to social and environmental conditions.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition 2013 (Updated 2021)

<sup>2</sup> Queensland Animal Care and Protection Act 2001

**Biological product**<sup>1</sup> : any product derived from animals, including blood products, vaccines, antisera, semen, antibodies and cell lines.

**Competent**<sup>1</sup> : the consistent application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required regarding the care and use of animals. It embodies the ability to transfer and apply knowledge and skill to new situations and environments.

**Compliance**<sup>1</sup> : acting in accordance with the Code.

**Conflict of interest**<sup>1</sup> : a situation in which a person's individual interests or responsibilities have the potential to influence the carrying out of his or her institutional role or professional obligations, or where an institution's interests or responsibilities have the potential to influence the carrying out of its obligations.

**Euthanasia**<sup>1</sup>: the humane killing of an animal, in the interests of its own welfare, to alleviate pain and distress. See also **humane killing**. The key difference between humane killing and euthanasia is the reason that the animal is being killed.

**Facility**<sup>1</sup> : any place where animals are kept, held or housed, including yards, paddocks, tanks, ponds, buildings, cages, pens and containers.

**Humane killing**<sup>1</sup> : the act of inducing death using a method appropriate to the species that results in a rapid loss of consciousness without recovery and minimum pain and/or distress to the animal. See also euthanasia. The key difference between humane killing and euthanasia is the reason that the animal is being killed.

**Investigator**<sup>1</sup> : any person who uses animals for scientific purposes. Includes researchers, teachers, undergraduate and postgraduate students involved in research projects, and people involved in product testing, environmental testing, production of biological products and wildlife surveys.

**Legislation (or Act)**: Laws made by Parliament which are referred to as Acts.

**Livestock**<sup>1</sup> : animals used in agriculture and aquaculture.

**Monitoring**<sup>1</sup> : measures undertaken to assess, or to ensure the assessment of, the wellbeing of animals in accordance with the Code. Monitoring occurs at different levels (including those of investigators, animal carers and animal ethics committees).

**Pain**<sup>1</sup> : an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage. It may elicit protective actions, result in learned avoidance and distress, and modify species-specific traits of behaviour, including social behaviour.

**Project**<sup>1</sup> : an activity or group of activities that form a discrete piece of work that aims to achieve a scientific purpose. Proposal: a written application to carry out a project for consideration by an AEC.

**Responsible Investigator:** UniSQ Academic or Staff member, listed as the Principal Investigator on the protocol with responsibility for all aspects of the project (even if a student conducts the work).

**Scientific purposes<sup>1</sup>** : all activities conducted with the aim of acquiring, developing or demonstrating knowledge or techniques in all areas of science, including teaching, field trials, environmental studies, Research (including the creation and breeding of a new animal line where the impact on animal wellbeing is unknown or uncertain), diagnosis, product testing and the production of biological products.

**Teacher<sup>1</sup>** : any person in charge of a teaching activity.

**Teaching activity<sup>1</sup>** : any action or group of actions undertaken with the aim of achieving a scientific purpose, where the scientific purpose is imparting or demonstrating knowledge or techniques to achieve an educational outcome in science, as specified in the relevant curriculum or competency requirements.

**Unexpected adverse event<sup>1</sup>** : an event that may have a negative impact on the wellbeing of animals and was not foreshadowed in the approved project or activity. An unexpected adverse event may result from different causes, including but not limited to:

- death of an animal, or group of animals, that was not expected (e.g. during surgery or anaesthesia, or after a procedure or treatment)
- adverse effects following a procedure or treatment that were not expected
- adverse effects in a larger number of animals than predicted during the planning of the project or activity, based on the number of animals actually used, not the number approved for the study
- a greater level of pain or distress than was predicted during the planning of the project or activity
- power failures, inclement weather, emergency situations or other factors external to the project or activity that have a negative impact on the welfare of the animals.

**Wildlife<sup>1</sup>** : free-living animals of native or introduced species, including those that are captive bred and those captured from free-living populations.

## Resources and References

- [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research \(2018\)](#)
- [Guidelines to Promote the Wellbeing of Animals Used for Scientific Purposes – The Assessment and Alleviation of Pain and Distress in Research Animals \(2008\)](#)
- [A Guide to the Care and Use of Australian Native Mammals in Research and Teaching \(2014\)](#)
- [Principles and Guidelines for the Care and Use of non-human Primates for Scientific Purposes \(2016\)](#)

- [Best Practice Methodology in the Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes \(2017\)](#)
- [Australian & New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching \(ANZCCART\)](#)



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